

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 204373

61

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TO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204373

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MCAP, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: NATO SPECIALIZATION STUDY - AIR FORCE SUB-GROUP

REFS: A. DRAFT FINAL REPORT - SUB-GROUP AIR, 26 SEPT 2973

(NOTAL); B. USNATO 4617; C. STATE 182905

1. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES PRELIMINARY COMMENTS ON REF A FOR
MISSION'S USE AT 16 OCTOBER AIR SUB-GROUP MEETING. FURTHER
COMMENTS WILL FOLLOW OUR RECEIPT OF COMPLETE FINAL DRAFT.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 STATE 204373

2. WE ARE IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH THRUST OF REPORT THAT OPTION 2, QTE CONVENTIONAL OFFENSIVE AIR OPERATIONS WITH A CAPABILITY FOR LIMITED AIR SUPERIORITY AND A LIMITED NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, UNQTE IS THE PREFERRED OPTION OF THE FOUR EXAMINED FOR ANY SPECIALIZATION BY THE DUTCH AIR FORCE. BUT WE REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT THE REPORT'S LACK OF CONCRETE DISCUSSION OF DUTCH COMPENSATION FOR DROPPING ALL-WEATHER AIR DEFENSE AND DEEP PENETRATION MISSIONS. THE DRAFT REPORT DOES ASSERT (PARA 37) THAT RNLAf SPECIALIZATION UNDER OPTION 2 WOULD QTE RESULT IN AN INCREASED CONTRIBUTION FOR CONVENTIONAL OFFENSIVE AIR OPERATIONS. UNQTE. WE WOULD WELCOME THIS ENHANCEMENT, BUT THE REPORT DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE IT.

3. THE REPORT STATES (PARA 5) THAT SPECIALIZATION QTE SHOULD ACHIEVE INCREASED DEFENSE VALUE FROM THE SAME EFFORT. UNQTE. AT SAME TIME, THE REPORT ALSO ASSERTS THAT

ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS PROMPTED THE STUDY AND QTE MUST BE A FACTOR IN ANY FINAL DECISION, UNQTE YET WILL NOT BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT NOW (PARA 6D). GRANTED THAT FUTURE WEAPON SYSTEMS COSTS ARE DIFFICULT TO FORECAST, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW IF THE DUTCH PLAN A ONE-FOR-ONE REPLACEMENT OF THEIR F-104'S.

4. THE REPORT ARGUES THAT THE HIGH COST OF MODERN, ALL-WEATHER AIR DEFENSE AIRCRAFT WOULD RESULT IN A SMALL NATION'S INABILITY TO PROCURE ENOUGH AIRCRAFT TO MAINTAIN THEM COST-EFFECTIVELY (PARA 23). THIS ARGUMENT IS INTUITIVELY PERSUASIVE, BUT IT NEEDS SOME QUANTIFICATION.

5. IN SUM, THE DUTCH AIR FORCE APPEARS TO WANT TO PROCURE A FOLLOW-ON FIGHTER WITHOUT COSTLY AVIONICS. THIS MAY BE A SENSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION FOR A SMALL ALLY IN THE LATE SEVENTIES. BUT THE PAPER DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE THE INCREASED DEFENSE VALUE OF OPTION 2 FOR THE SAME EFFORT. NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, DOES THE REPORT PREDICT THAT THE DUTCH WILL CONTINUE TO DEVOTE THE SAME (OR MORE) FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO THEIR AIR FORCE AS THEY ARE NOW DOING. THE MAJOR ARGUMENTS PRESENTED IN FAVOR OF THE NEW

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 204373

RNLAf MISSIONS I.E., THE QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS THE OTHER ALLIES ARE MAKING, AND NO DOUBT AT CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN COST, ARE THE WRONG ARGUMENTS. WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE A FULLER DISCUSSION OF THE MERITS OF SPECIALIZATION PER SE.
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